

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PROVIDING SURVIVING MILITARY SPOUSES WITH MORTGAGE PROTECTION

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1263, "to amend Service Members' Civil Relief Act." This legislation would provide surviving spouses of service members with certain protections relating to mortgages and mortgage foreclosures.

The proposed bill to amend Service Members Civil Relief Act will afford surviving spouses of service members who die while in the military and whose death is service-connected, the same protections against sale, foreclosure, and seizure of property currently applicable to their husbands who while in military service are unable to meet an obligation on real or personal property. It is in a spirit of deep gratitude and appreciation that I fight to provide for the surviving spouses of our deceased military men and women, in order to provide them with the tools they need to maintain ownership of their homestead after supporting members of our community who served our country. It is the responsibility of all Members of Congress and the Administration to fulfill our moral obligation to those men and women who have fought to protect our freedom and democracy, and the families that supported their courageous lives.

In the State of Texas, we have nearly 1.7 million veterans, and 18th District is home to 32,000 of them. Of the 200,000 veterans of military service who live and work in Houston, more than 13,000 are veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Additionally, there are almost 34,000 soldiers from Texas currently deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am pained by the numbers of fine men and women who have lost their lives during their deployment.

As of August 2, 4,683 brave Americans have died in Iraq and Afghanistan since the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) on October 7, 2001 and Operation Iraqi Freedom, which began with the invasion of Iraq on March 19, 2003. Of the total deaths, 3,708 were due to hostile fire, and the remainder due to non-hostile actions (such as accident, suicide, or illness).

In August, 66 American troops died in violence, the bulk of them during a devastating helicopter crash on Aug. 6, which killed 30 special operations troops and eight Afghans on a high-risk raid. The 66 deaths were the highest count for that war since July 2010, when 65 Americans were killed. Nora Bensahel, a military strategist with the Center for a New American Security, said the numbers may not mean as much as they seem. "In Afghanistan, the number of people killed overall was very high, but that doesn't say

much about number of attacks—half of those [killed] were from a single incident—a particularly devastating one," referring to the Aug. 6 crash.

Monthly American casualties in Iraq have largely been in the single digits for several years now, but the war there has not been without perils: last July, 14 American servicemen died amid fighting there, many of whom leave spouses and children behind.

According to the Department of Labor, as of June 2011 there have been more than 2,500 coalition troops that have now been killed—with 1,644 of them being American. Further, the Defense Manpower Data Center Statistical Analysis Division has identified 3,215 Americans killed in the Iraq war, with 23 having been from Texas. This legislation addresses a need to find ways to provide mortgage assistance to the surviving spouses of the men and women who have fought for our country.

After dedicating their lives to serving our country it is important to assist the family members of deceased service members.

In order to address this obstacle to employment, The Veterans Opportunity Work Act (VOW) makes the Transition Assistance Program mandatory. The Department of Labor must thereby create a system by which licensure and certifications are translatable to those available at the state level. This is done in an effort to address the barriers between the skills and training received in the military and requirements for civilian licenses and other credentials.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1263, to amend Service Members Civil Relief Act.

HOSPICE OF HARNETT COUNTY RECOGNIZED FOR 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. RENEE L. ELLMERS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize 25 years of service by Hospice of Harnett County (North Carolina). They offer the highest quality non-profit hospice services and support to Harnett County patients and family caregivers facing serious and life-limiting illness regardless of their income or ability to pay.

Hospice of Harnett County providers take the time to ask what's important to those they are caring for—and listen to what their patients and families say.

For 25 years, Hospice of Harnett County's skilled and compassionate hospice and palliative care professionals—including physicians, nurses, social workers, therapists, counselors, health aides, and clergy—provide comprehensive care focused on the wishes of each individual patient.

Through pain management and symptom control, caregiver training and assistance, and

emotional and spiritual support, Hospice of Harnett County helps patients to live fully up until the final moments, surrounded and supported by the faces of loved ones, friends, and committed caregivers.

The provision of quality hospice and palliative care reaffirms our belief in the essential dignity of every person, regardless of age, health, or social status, and that every stage of human life deserves to be treated with the utmost respect and care.

Since 1986, more than 1,700 persons in Harnett County living with life-limiting illness, and their families, received care from Hospice of Harnett County.

Hospice of Harnett County encourages all people to learn more about options of care and to share their wishes with family, loved ones, and their healthcare professionals through community events, educational activities, and public awareness.

I would like to proclaim November 2011 the 25th Anniversary of Hospice of Harnett County by encouraging citizens to increase their understanding and awareness of care at the end of life and to celebrate Hospice of Harnett County's 25 years of service to the citizens of Harnett County.

RECOGNIZING SILVA HEALTH MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL'S BLUE RIBBON AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the achievements of Silva Health Magnet High School. Silva Health was recently honored with the 2011 National Blue Ribbon award from the United States Department of Education for excellence in education.

The National Blue Ribbon School award honors both public and private elementary, middle and high schools where students achieve at high levels and also schools where the achievement gap is narrowing. Since 1982, approximately 6,500 American schools have received this coveted award.

I want to personally congratulate the teachers, administrators, and staff of Silva Health Magnet High School for their commitment and dedication to our young students in El Paso. This year only 304 schools nationwide received the award, and they will be honored at a ceremony in Washington, DC. The Blue Ribbon validates the efforts of these schools in creating a positive and effective learning environment. These schools and their communities have achieved a degree of excellence of which they can justifiably be proud.

Silva Health Magnet is a fitting example of the type of educational curriculum and environment that encourages students to become interested in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Our

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